

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHYN #2000 3070750
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 030750Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY SANAA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3122

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 002000

SIPDIS

FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/PPD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/01/2019

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KPAO](#) [YM](#)

SUBJECT: NEW PRESS COURT ISSUES FIRST CONVICTION AGAINST
YEMENI JOURNALISTS

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen Seche for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (U) In the latest blow to Yemen's bludgeoned independent press, the Special Press and Publications Court issued its first conviction on October 31 in its second ruling. The court, established in May 2009, ruled that a 2008 article entitled "Weapon of Mass Destruction," critical of President Saleh, constituted libel, and banned the article's author, U.S.-based Yemeni-American Munir al-Mawri, from practicing journalism in Yemen for life. The court also sentenced Mawri in absentia to two years in prison and banned Samir Jubran, Editor-in-Chief of independent newspaper al-Masdar, which published the article, from working as a journalist for one year.

¶2. (C) Civil-society organizations, opposition parties and independent journalists unanimously condemned the ruling. Jubran, who participated in a U.S. Department of State International Visitor program in June 2009, will meet with Ambassador Seche this week at Embassy Sana'a to discuss the ruling and the future of press freedom in Yemen.
SECHE